

International Rice Festival

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Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: GN Docket 11-65

Dear Chairman Genachowski,

Seventy-five years ago, when the International Rice Festival began, personal connections were formed face-to-face, jobs were typically tied to agriculture, and Acadia Parish was in desperate need of economic growth and renewal.

Today, people connect with each other through technology, sending text messages, e-mails and even video-conferencing around the world. Jobs are more often created by access to information, and by the ability to apply knowledge in distant locations. Advanced communications technology is essential, both for transmitting data and for keeping businesses and customers connected in a mobile world. And Acadia Parish is still in need of continuing economic growth and renewal.

Anyone who questions the extent to which mobile communications technology has changed our lives should spend some time crowd-watching at the Festival. Visitors are making phone calls, sending text messages, and taking photos – all with their phones. We even have credit card approvals by vendors via their phones. All of this can be considered progress, but it also speaks to the need for continuing investment in building an even more robust communications system that serves all areas, and is not just concentrated in the major cities.

This is why I support AT&T's purchase of T-Mobile. As I understand the plans, combining the resources of the companies will create better service and expand the availability of wireless broadband.

In a sense, the wireless industry is similar to rice farming in that the strategies for success might seem contrary. Flooding a field is not what most farmers would want – but it works quite well when growing rice. Some might think that combining companies would increase prices, but over the past several years and through previous wireless telecommunications mergers, we have seen lower prices, better services and more options for phones and features.

Our Festival is designed to draw investment and stimulate commerce in the Acadiana region. It seems to me that in creating a faster and more pervasive wireless network, this proposed merger will support our objectives. I hope we can count on your support.

Sincerely,
Glynn Mayard, General Chairman
INTERNATIONAL RICE FESTIVAL

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